TITLE: The Cup of Christ

TEXT: Luke 22:39-44; Is. 53:5; 1 Pet. 2:22-25;

Ephe. 6:12; 1 Co. 11:25; Jn. 17:20-23

INTRODUCTION: this morning I want us to talk about and contemplate the cup of Christ. Just what is the significance of the cup that Christ partook of for us…

**Luke 22:39 - 44 (NIV) 39Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him.  40On reaching the place, he said to them, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation.”  41He withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed,  42“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”  43An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.  44And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

Jesus prayer to the Father on that fateful night…..

**42“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”**

What was this mysterious cup that Christ was taling about in the darkness of Gethsemane?

***pot-ay'-ree-on***

**a *drinking* *vessel*; by extension the contents thereof, that is, a *cupful* (*draught*); figuratively a *lot* or *fate.***

The word cup not only speaks of the container itself but it speaks of the contents of the container as well.

The contents of the cup are just as important as the container that holds them.

Actually the contents of the cup are more important than the cup itself…

You can have identical cups but the substance of the cups may contain different things.

One cup may contain hot chocolate, another coffee, another orange juice, and another- if you watch shows like fear factor---worms or liquefied bugs…

So what was the substance of the cup that Jesus was about to partake of?

First of all, this cup that Christ was about to partake of contained all the sin of the world. It was the cup of sin! And not just a sin or some sin but this cup Christ was about to drink contained all sin.

In the most literal sense; He who knew no sin was about to become the sacrifice for all sin!

He who knew no sin of His own was about to become the sin bearer. Jesus, the spotless, the sinless Lamb of God was about to take on all the sin of the world upon Himself. All past sin, all present sin and all future sin!

Can you imagine what that would have been like for Christ?

Imagine you are visiting the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta. You walk into a large, sealed room full of hundreds of vials containing disease---In fact all of the world’s know diseases are contained there. Cancer, Aids, Syphilis, Gonorrhea, Polio, botulism—every dangerous and foul disease known to man.

You see a technician unstopping each vial, one by one, and pouring the contents into a large cup. How would you react if the technician asked you to touch the cup? And if the technician asked you to drink the contents, what terror would fill your soul?

But all of that is nothing compared to the cup of sin which Jesus was about to partake!

This cup was foul, so hideous that Christ cried out in anguish to the Father…**42“Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.”**

The second element in Jesus bitter cup was Gods abandonment.

The instant that Jesus would drink from that foul cup, Christ would become full of sin and with that sin He would become like the arch criminal of the universe!

God, whose holiness prevents sinful man from entering His presence, had to turn His back on Christ, His son, leaving Jesus abandoned and alone.

The impact of that abandonment is revealed to us in verse 44…..

**44And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

Some see this as figurative but I take it as literal!

Jesus literally sweats blood! How is that possible

Dr. Ted Roberts was our speaker at men’s retreat several years ago in Geneva Wisconsin. Before being called by God into the ministry Ted Roberts was a marine fighter pilot during the Viet Nam war.

At the time of his marriage his wife was a devoted Christian but he was not.

Like many men he eventually came to a saving relationship with Christ through the devotion and life witness of his wife.

Ted Roberts says when he accepted Christ he knew little to nothing about the Bible.

When he shipped back out to Viet Nam he was stationed on a Navy air craft carrier as a Marine fighter pilot. From there he would fly missions over various parts of Viet Nam.

He said that a couple times a month all the pilots would have to go through several hours of flight instruction.

At the time he says he was struggling with this particular portion of Scripture….**44And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

Dr. Roberts said that this was simply not sinking in, he wasn’t able to grasp or comprehend it..

He thought that it surely must be figurative. That Jesus sweat profusely like a man would bleed.

And then a flight instructor was talking one day about Test pilots. He told of how when something goes terribly wrong in flight and the pilot would find his plane out of control and in a downward spiral toward the ground with no way to eject from the plane, that just moments before impact as he would see the ground coming up before him and realizing what was going to happen, that with the spike in emotion just before impart often the blood vessels in the forehead would start to rupture from the extreme spike of adrenaline and blood pressure and it would appear as if they were sweating blood…

When Dr. Roberts heard this he says it was like a light went off in his head and he realized that this must have been what happen to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane that night. Jesus saw what was coming! And there was such a rush of emotion as he who knew no sin was about to become the sacrifice for all sin, the bearer of all sin, that the pressure became so great that it caused the blood vessels in His forehead to start to rupture and would have appeared as if He were sweating blood!

Scripture says: **44And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.**

Part of that anguish had to be from the realization that the Father would have to turn His head away from and abandon the Son as He partook of the cup of our sin.

Third, since God must punish sin; He poured on Christ the great fiery cauldron of His wrath when Christ took our sin upon Himself.

Isaiah speaks of the wrath of God being poured out upon Christ in:

**Isaiah 53:5 (NIV) 5But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  and by his wounds we are healed.**

Did you catch that?

**The punishment that brought us peace was upon him!**

God is a holy and a just God. His holiness and justice demands that sin, all sin be judged. The guilty must be punished. The holiness and justice of God demands it!

Christ took upon himself the cup of all sin! He took your sin and my sin and every man, woman and child’s sin upon Himself!

He became the bearer of all sin!

**1 Peter 2:22 - 25 (NIV) 22“He committed no sin,     and no deceit was found in his mouth--  24He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.**

**The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  and by his wounds we are healed.**

And even more tragic then that, Christ, rejected by humanity and abandoned by God, was then given over to demons.

From Jesus arrest in the garden till his death on the cross we see all the demonic forces of hell rise to attack Christ..

Do you realize that nothing with what happened to Christ over the next several hours was normal!

The arrest in the garden was neither normal nor legal!

The night time trial before Caiaphas then Herod and then Pilate were neither normal nor legal!

Being condemned without concurring witness was neither normal nor legal!

Being both whipped and crucified was not normal or legal!

The point is this went far beyond any kind of mere human activity…

All the demons of hell had their hands in it as well…

The apostle Paul says in:

**Ephesians 6:12 (NIV) 12For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

We see all the demonic forces of evil present as Jesus embraced the cup of Calgary and as he was given over to them for a time…

In essence, Jesus sank to the bottomless pit of hell, where the demons fell on Him with fang and claw.

All of this was because of the bitter cup Christ drank that night in the garden of Gethsemane. The cup of your and my sin.

And the most important thing about this cup is that it wasn’t Christ cup at all! It was ours! The sin was ours. The abandonment should have been ours! The fiery punishment should have been ours! The attack of demons should have been ours as well.

But Christ drank this cup and bore all these things for you and me…

**The punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  and by his wounds we are healed.**

The cup that Christ drank was a cup that we deserved!

It was in fact our cup!

Christ now has a cup that he offers to us…

Today the cup of Christ is one full of blessings---a cup full of love, pardon, peace and joy. This is the cup that He now offers to you and me.

Today Christ offers us to drink from the cup of the New Covenant!

When Christ shared one last supper with His disciples he talked about this cup of the new covenant!

**1 Corinthians 11:25 (NIV) 25In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”**

**“This cup is the new covenant in my blood!**

Through the cup that Jesus bore for us, the cup of our sin and condemnation, Jesus now has a new cup to offer us!

The cup of the new Covenant that was sealed and establish by His shed blood!

**This cup is the new covenant in my blood!**

The new Covenant that God has made with us was made at Calgary’s cross. And it was the most sacred and binding of all covenants! It was a blood covenant! A blood covenant that was sealed with the sacrificial blood of Jesus.

EXAMPLE: BLOOD COVENANT..CEREMONY---

Sacrifice made and split in half and the halves were separated----The two making the covenant would walk in figure 8 between the halves---what they would be symbolically saying was “may God do to me as I have done to this animal if I ever break this covenant.” Then they would Exchange their cloaks---Symbolizing what I have in now yours just as what you have is now mine…Then they would exchange their belts their belts did not hold up their pants but was what they attached their sword and dager to. They were symbolizing that I will now defend you and you will defend me.

Then they would exchange of lists of assets and liabilities---everything you have both good and bad in now mine and everything that I have both good and bad is now yours.

Finally they would seal the covenant by eating a covenant meal together!

Partaking together of the same food and drink symbolized the totality and completeness of the union that had just taken place. The covenant meal was the seal of the blood covenant that the participants had entered into.

A Christian marriage is a blood covenant relationship…

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united unto his wife and the two of them will become one flesh…

This is a complete exchange of assets and liabilities and weaknesses and strengths….

When we enter into this new covenant with Christ we find the same dynamic as when we enter into a Christian marriage. The dynamic of two becoming as one!

When we partake of the cup of the new covenant by embracing Jesus as Lord and Savior of our life we become one with the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit! We become one with the triune God!

In praying for you and I Jesus has this to say in:

**John 17:20 - 23 (NIV) 20“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,  21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.  22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

Did you catch that? Let this sink in! Try, to the best of your finite ability, to digest the words of Jesus here as He prays specifically for you and me--

**21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us!**

Jesus doesn’t say that all of us may be one “kind of like” He is in the Father and the Father is in Him or that we are “sort of” be one as He and the father are one, but He says: may they be one “just” as you are in me and I am in You!

**22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:  23I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**

This is an invitation to enter into a blood covenant with God!

When we accept this offer to enter into this blood covenant relationship with God by accepting Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our life then we become heir to all the covenant promises and responsibilities….

All that I have is now Yours! All that You have is now mine!

All my defense is now at Your disposal! All Your defense is now at my disposal! All that I own and all that I owe now belongs to You just as all that You own and all that You owe belongs to me!

You may be thinking…Are you actually trying to tell me that all that God has can be mine? All of His assets and possessions, All of His and strengths and provisions, All of His protection and care? All are mine to claim through this covenant relationship?

No! That is not what I am trying to tell you--- that is what God is trying to tell you!

But this is only one side of the covenant agreement…

The other half is: God, all that I have, all that I am is now Yours!

All of my assets and possessions, all of my strengths, all that I have and all that I am are now Yours! I place my all at your disposal just as You have placed Your all at my disposal….

Church, if we have come to trust in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins and the salvation of our souls, if we have accepted Jesus as the Lord and Savior of our life, then we have partaken of the new covenant cup of Christ and have entered into a blood covenant relationship with God. We have become a covenant partner with the God of creation…

God will always be faithful to His covenant promises..

The question that I pose in closing this morning is this:

How faithful have we been, how faithful are we being to our covenant promises to God?

Have we, are we, fulfilling our covenant vows to Him?

Have we truly placed at His disposal all that we have and all that we are?

Or as we sang this morning…Is our all on the alter of sacrifice laid… Your heart does the Spirit control?

You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest as you yield Him your body and soul!

Have you partaken of the covenant cup of Christ this morning and if so, have you, are you fulfilling your covenant promise, are you yielding to Him your body and soul?